

Central MRS Meeting  
February 24, 2005  
Guilford County DSS

Counties Present: Caswell, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Orange, Union

Non MRS Counties: Stanly

State Staff: Tony Troop, Beverly Daniels, Dawn Warren, Heather Thomas

**Agenda**

Division Stuff

Letters/Notices

Legislation

Training

Evaluation

Consultation - position

Documentation CFSR discussion

Training/Administrative Letters

- Dated 2/22, effective today change notice re: problem pregnancy services CR# 02-2005 Contact Tina (704) 462-2686 for more information.
- Dated 3/7 follow up to 10/14 letter preparation for federal IVE audit.
- Dated 3/8 re: responding to families affected by meth discusses trainings 20 dates in various sites with Laura Elmore.
  - Please note that this training is the *only* training that deals with DSS policy in connection with the meth issue. Any trainings with law enforcement, do not replace this training.
- Update for investigations in day care. Includes new case decision summary which will serve as 100% of your documentation for DCD.

Legislation

- House Bill 277 (MRS) is being reviewed by House Judicial Committee.
  - Changes investigation to assessment .
  - Asking General Assembly to do away with requirements to make home visit for assessments of child care settings its not family friendly.
  - As part of prompt and thorough assessment talk about extended family so that you already have that knowledge in case children end up coming into care.

## Training

- Cornerstone I begins Monday in the non-MRS counties.
- 2 trainer positions available with the Division.
- MRS Training Institute June 1-3 in Greensboro
  - This will offer learning opportunities for experienced as well as counties new to MRS.
  - Open to all 100 counties.
  - Trying to get Institute for Applied Research to speak (did evaluation for Minnesota and Missouri)
  - Meetings on 3/17, 4/12, 5/6 to talk about and plan the Institute. These meetings will be from 1-3 in Raleigh (Albemarle bldg.)

## Evaluation

- Letter coming out from Duke to all counties. The letter says your county may or may not be a part of the evaluation (MRS and control counties). If you are, it asks you to give a consent to contact form to families during assessments. If you are not a part of the evaluation, you do not have to do anything with this form.
- Web based training continues.

## Consultation

- Primary consultation should be with Tony, CPRs, and Work First reps check with these people before calling the Division.
- MRS policy position is posted on Office of State Personnel website. Titled Program Consultant II by the first paragraph it will be obvious which one is the MRS position.

## FYI

- North Carolina has the opportunity to present MRS as a whole (specifically the collaboration b/w CPS and Work 1<sup>st</sup>) at the Nation Conference for Child Abuse and Neglect in Boston.
- We did not apply for this, they came to us.

## Documentation/Child & Family Services Review

Beverly gave a summary of the process:

- In 1992 the General Assembly passed a law requiring a county review every 2 years by the state. This was done to ensure consistency, identify needs, etc.
- The process changed in 2002 as a result of the Feds reviewing the state. From this perspective you can't separate the counties and the state as we are all in this together. No states passed the federal review.
- As a result of the review we changed the measurement instruments to better reflect what the feds wanted to capture. The emphasis was placed on outcomes with clients.
- This all leads back to documentation. In the past the review team has read records where they could not figure out what happened during the case.

- Have added client interviews, which initially they thought wouldn't go well, but it turns out that about 95% of people are happy to talk about their experience.
- Interviews have also allowed the review team to get a lot of information that was not in the record. If things are not included in documentation, the reviewers can't rate you on it.
- This all leads to funding, for the state and counties we will lose money if we don't pass this review.
- During reviews the team may provide consultation for things that you are not specifically "dinged" on if they think a county would benefit from the consultation.
- In documentation, include whatever relates to the risk factors - don't include a bunch of extra information.

### Group Discussion

- Mecklenburg shared an outline and format for documentation.
- Tony has read a lot of MRS records that address the outcomes, but still not seeing evidence of family centered MRS practice.
- Wellbeing I and Safety II have a direct correlation as they both deal with service provision.
- What is sufficient contact with the family?
  - MRS policy for 215 high/intensive risk contact should be weekly
  - Realize that when the investigation is complete, but the case has not been staffed and closed, the agency is still liable. You cannot just not see the child anymore until you get around to closing the case.
  - All cases are different so there is no one answer, but you should look to the safety assessment and make a decision regarding frequency of visits based on that. That way, you can justify and explain decisions.
- At the Division, we cannot write policy around organizational issues. Policy is written for best practice, if your agency is short staffed, or has other internal organizational issues, policy cannot change to deal with those issues.
  - Directors Association looking into staffing/turnover issue.
  - Asking General Assembly to appropriate more money for staffing at the local level and for the Collaborative to recruit
- Review tools look at Safety, Permanence, and Well Being Outcomes, which includes a lot.
  - Once you raise an issue (including ones not in the initial report) you must follow up on it. If the SW decides that it does not need to be followed up on, must document that in the case record.
- Common issues:
  - Initiation a case is not initiated until all the children in the home have been seen. All children in the home are considered alleged victims and must see them all. If SW does not see them all on the

same date, the date of initiation on the 5104 should be the date SW saw the last victim child.

- Varying from policy if there is a reason to vary from policy (it is impossible not to, better for safety, etc.) SW should document why.
  - Do not have to substantiate on the whole family just because an investigation was done on them all (nor you do have to find in need of services on all children).
  - 210/215 disconnect frequently there is a disconnect between what was assessed in 210 and the services provided in 215.
  - Permanency some records do not show a movement toward permanency
- Question: If relative is willing to take in child but will not take legal custody away from mother, can you close the case? In order to close a case there must be safety and permanence. In the situation above, there is no permanence and not necessarily safety because there is nothing to prevent mom from taking child back whenever she wants. Depends on the situation with the parent. If it is a good situation you may be able to reduce risk enough to close the case, but generally preferable to have the relative take custody.
  - Review team will look at revising the tool and the process after we meet with the Feds in June.
  - Review team will not review specifically for MRS items. Will provide consultation for them, but no dings yet. This will change when all 100 counties implement MRS.

#### MRS Policy

- Currently using MRS policy dated February 2003 that was written by a group of county representatives. This policy will be updated again.
- Tony sent an email to directors and contacts in the 52 MRS counties discussing the work group forming to re-write MRS policy. This group will meet at Guilford Co. DSS, the first meeting is April 7<sup>th</sup> at 10:00. Each county can send 1 person, who must be able to speak with authority.
- There will be a quick turnaround because it must be complete by the first of June so that Tony can begin training the new counties. Goal is to have all 100 counties functioning MRS counties as of start of business on Jan 2, 2006.
- Participants should come to the meeting with list of changes that they think should be made (can also send to Tony beforehand).
- The first issue will be bogus reports and how counties should handle them. The challenge will be to decide what criteria will be used for deciding that there is absolutely nothing to the report and at what point in the assessment process social workers can stop.